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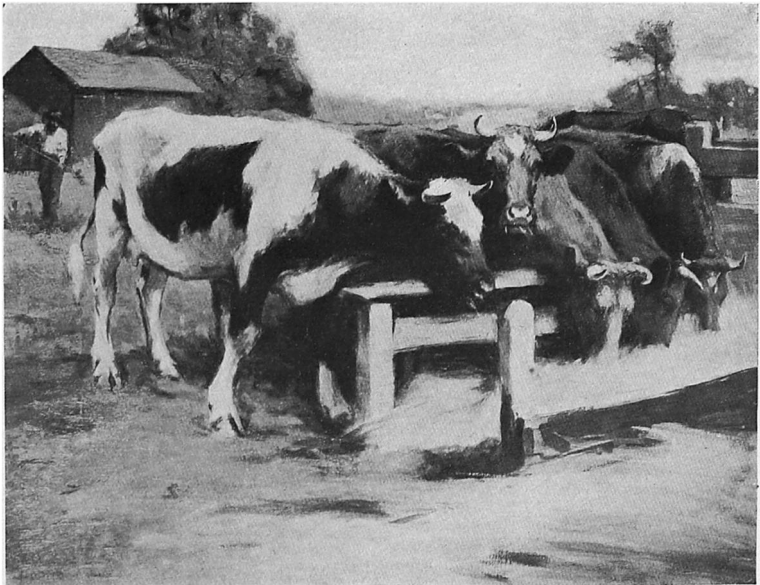
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IMPERIAL ARBITERS OF ART

Much has been said, in praise or condemnation, of imperial arbiters in matters of art, and the German kaiser, on account of his decisive measures, has been made the text of a good many philippics, and not a few enthusiastic indorsements. The quota of the former, however, far exceeds that of the latter. The artists naturally resent dictatorship, and relegate to themselves the right to decide what is and what is not art, what is and what is not worthy of public approval and support. On the other hand, many competent judges feel the need of a controlling hand to eliminate fads, vagaries, and license in art, and are prone to laud the dictator, provided, of course, that his actions are characterized by sobriety and good judgment. One such advocate of imperial decree, whose words I am permitted to send to the readers of BRUSH AND PENCIL, waxes humorously in defense of a guiding, even of a restricting, hand—a power, so to speak, behind the throne.

According to the dictum of the critic referred to, the rich Romans



FEEDING CATTLE
By Eugenie Fish Glaman

had private galleries of paintings and sculpture, like the cultivated and wealthy Greeks whom they copied in letters and the arts—but they had no public picture shows. A thousand artists did not besiege a building called an art academy, while a delegation of their more astute or lucky fellows, calling themselves Academicians, decided which ones among the pictures submitted should be hung—and then hanged—by the critics, and which should be cast forth to the profane and vulgar crowd outside. Had such an institution as an academy show with its jury of painters existed in Rome, the Latin dictionary would be far richer in curse words than it is. For the imagination which prompts the youth of France, Germany, and America to devise travesties of fact and fancy on canvas also helps them in the task of adding to the number of drastic words, sharp and explosive hints of a quick dispatch to places far remote—and objectionable when found—veiled allusions to former or future states of existence, obloquies neatly packed in some brief word. These are some of the lines on which we excel the ancients.

Take a Roman emperor, for example; what a field he missed in the lack of an official art academy! Poor thing—the reader will



AUTUMN
By J. C. Johansen

remember that these are not the words of the undersigned—he had only music and letters in which to reward with the gold of plundered provinces the professors who took care not to know more than he, when he was around, and commit to prison or send into exile those incautious enough to write better verse or perform better on the lyre. The modern Cæsar has a host of architects, sculptors, and painters

whom he can lecture and encourage if they only will not attempt to do anything beyond the forms prescribed by imperial and royal authority.

The vast field of Philistine art lies before him, and the art lord can cease a moment being war lord to appoint his Captains of ten and Colonels of a hundred, his Generals and his Field Marshals of art. He can, by his profound strategy, frustrate the plans of servile revolutionists, who without asking permission, have gathered together to poison the minds of the people with impressionist paintings and sculptures ribald and Rodinesque. He watches over the morals of his subject artists with a fatherliness beautiful in its paternalism, and fixes with a scathing stare the curator of a public museum who sneaks a "vibratory" land-



FEATHERING THE NEST

By Karl A. Buehr

scape into the imperial collections. No more favors for him! Writhing under the secret sting of his own wickedness, the unpatriotic wretch tries to drown his bad conscience in good beer, and soon his occupation's gone.

Even an emperor, however, cannot escape the hidden sneer, nor protect himself from absurd reports which are started by artists furious because their work does not hit the proper level of sane and patriotic art. For example, the German emperor is just now the victim of a silly story, that next year he will be one of the jury to sit in judgment on the art works for the exhibition at Berlin.

There is nothing in it. The German emperor always is the jury without forming part of it; for the jury knows the imperial taste. Such objects as may pass the guard while still unacceptable to the imperial arbiter only serve to cast in relief the works which receive medals and honorable mentions. They serve the purpose of the drunken helots in Lacedemon, they are warnings to good German art boys. The invention is jejune.

It shows the degradation to which the minds of the secession artists of the Fatherland have come when they fabricate such nonsense about their wise and stern, yet truly kind, patron. They should not say such a thing, for it belittles the kaiser. If they cannot be patriots and paint and sculpt on the official lines, they might at least have the heart to recognize that a ruler who works so hard for their betterment should not be made the target for stories which, to a person in his exalted rank, come perilously near insult to majesty. Let them thank God they have a kaiser who day and night protects them from the corrosive influence of modern French art.

These words may not accord with the views of the rank and file of the apostles of liberty, but after all they are worth reading—it being premised that they are offered here only as the presentation of one side of a big disputed question. This much at least may be said: if in our municipal art we feel the need of a censor to banish disfigurements, eliminate flagrant breaches of taste, and provide for sane, wholesome, worthy art, it is not unreasonable to suppose that a similar official might be of service on similar lines in public galleries and current exhibitions.

A READER.



THE SOFIE
By Anna L. Stacey